

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 21, 26 and 27 are pending. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1-6 and 21 have been amended, claims 8-20 and 22-25 have been canceled and claims 26 and 27 have been added.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Grainger in the February 7, 2006 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Restriction was required in this application and Applicant elected claims 1-7 and 21. Applicant reserves the right to file one or more divisional applications based on non-elected claims 8-20 and 22-25.

The title was objected to as non-descriptive. By this Amendment, the title has been amended. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 3 and 5. Accordingly, Applicant adds claims 26 and 27 to recite the features of original claims 2 and 3.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 7 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Kosugi et al. (Kosugi), U.S. Patent No. 6,721,532. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kosugi fails to disclose a thermal fixing device with a fixing roller and a first pressing member and a second pressing member that are disposed to face and contact the fixing roller, as recited in claim 1 and as similarly recited in claim 21.

Kosugi's Fig. 3, for example, discloses a first fixing unit 11A with a fixing roller 11A1 and a pressure roller 11A2, a second fixing unit 11B with a pair of sheet conveying rollers 11B1, 11B2, and a belt 13 that spans the first fixing unit 11A and the second fixing unit 11B (col. 9, lines 57-64). However, the fixing roller 11A1 does not contact two pressing members. In other words, Kosugi fails to disclose two pressing members that face and contact the fixing roller 11A1.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

As discussed during the personal interview, the combination of Kosugi and JP-A-5-273881 (JP'881) fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1 and 21.

As discussed above, Kosugi fails to disclose the combination of features recited in claims 1 and 21. Furthermore, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a temperature not lower than a glass transition point of the developer in the structure specific to JP'881. As discussed in Applicant's Background, JP'881 suffers deficiencies that can be overcome by using the glass transition point of claims 1 and 21 (page 58, line 16-page 59, line 2). JP'881 fails to provide any disclosure or suggestion with regard to using a temperature not lower than a glass transition point of the developer.

The temperature appropriate for fixing an image depends on the characteristics of the toner. It is generally known to set the temperature of the fixing roller to be in the range from 150°C to 190°C. However, the temperature may vary depending on the toner that each printer manufacturer uses. As such, although a temperature not lower than a glass transition point of the developer may be known (as evidenced by Kosugi), it would not have been obvious to use such a temperature in JP'881.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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